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LATIN LEAFLET

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TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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Fourteenth Meeting of the Latin Club

The fourteenth regular meeting of The New York Latin Club is called for Saturday, February 18, at 12 M, in the Hotel St Denis, corner of Broadway and Eleventh Street, New York. Professor H C Elmer, of Cornell University, will address the club.

H H BICE, *President*A L HODGES, *Secretary*

Extracts from a Teacher's Note Book

(PROFESSOR ROLFE'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE NEW YORK
LATIN CLUB, December 3, 1904)
In Five Parts, Part II

If we admit the difficulty of the Roman pronunciation, as I think we must, our obligation to use it, which I am willing to admit, is somewhat like the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. We have it, we cannot make up our minds to repeal it, and if we do not like it, we must, like our southern brothers, evade it in some way. Now there are at least two ways of evading the difficulties of the Roman pronunciation. We may have our pupils read their Latin and let them do it in a loose and slovenly manner; or we may give up reading the Latin altogether and confine ourselves to translating it. The former is demoralizing to teacher and class alike. The latter is equally bad in my opinion, because, as I have said, I believe that it is only by constantly reading the Latin aloud that one can acquire a feeling for the language and the ability to translate it thoroughly well. So strong is this belief, that anything which tended to discourage the reading of Latin would have great difficulty in justifying its existence in my sight. That the Roman pronunciation is having this effect I am led to believe from talks that I have had with my students and with teachers in some of our best schools. A straw which to my mind shows how the wind blows is the fact, that many of our recent Beginners' Books have no lesson on pronunciation, and relegate all information on the subject to an Introduction.

It does not at all help the situation that now and then one runs across a conscientious soul who is giving so much time to pronunciation and to quantity, that he is neglecting practically everything else. I have never observed that such teachers accomplish anything in their hobby which at all compensates for what they do not do. I must say in self defense, that in spite of what I have said, I have never neglected either the reading of the Latin or the effort to secure a good pronunciation from my students; and I have no intention of doing either.

What then are we to do? I wish I knew a more satisfactory answer than that we must do the best we can. The spectre of the Roman pronunciation is always before us, from the beginning class to the seminary, and it stands between us and our work. Every course becomes in part a course in pronunciation. For example, I am teaching Latin writing to a class of juniors and seniors, in which a part of the work consists in reading model passages of Latin. Being mortal, their pronunciation is not faultless, and I am confronted with the alternative of wasting valuable time in correcting errors, or of letting them pass without correction. I can appreciate the attitude of the elder Pliny, who, as his nephew tells us (*Epist iii, 5, 12*), when a friend corrected the faulty pronunciation of a reader and compelled him to reread the passage correctly, said: "You understood him, didn't you?" And when his friend admitted that he did, said: "Then why did you make him repeat it? We have lost more than ten lines by this interruption". But a New England conscience will not always allow me to follow his example.

I would help the college student by having the long vowels marked in all his texts, both prose and poetry, as is now generally done in texts for the use of secondary schools. This is quite as legitimate as marking the accents in Greek texts, which are surely not more difficult than the Latin quantities, and it is idle to say that students should have learned their quantities by the time they get to college. They shouldn't—and they don't. Most of them never will, but the marked texts will help them.

I give this great idea freely to future editors of Series, of whom there must be many before me. I must add, however, that when I told my publisher that if we were beginning our Series again, I should strongly advocate such a plan, he devoutly thanked Heaven that the idea had come to me so late. But I believe that we shall all live to see this done, unless we are first persuaded to give up the Roman pronunciation altogether. Even with marked texts in their hands many students will mispronounce and even misaccent words, as I know by sad experience, but less frequently and with smaller justification.

I wish to say that this idea about the marked texts is not a haphazard one made on the spur of the moment, but the result of much thought and of deliberate conviction. Of course it may none the less be an erroneous one, but personally I believe in it. The great Indo-European philologist Osthoff marks his quantities even in the Latin examples in his publications, and I should like to see the appropriate macrons an indispensable part of every Latin word, wherever it be written and by whomsoever.

For the teacher of beginning Latin, who must teach a great mass of quantities in a single year, everything that can be done in this direction has been done, and I have nothing to suggest. It is in a